1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4

XII

Camels, Women, Children—and Locusts

231 OH, THESE CAMELS! They stamp and trample; they buck, they quarrel, they weep and take fright—yes! And they laugh; they are helpless, but ever and anon rebellious. They will run like a machine for hours, [492] and all at once stop or refuse to budge. Only with a rider in the saddle are they erect, proud animals, self-assured, noble, moving with elastic strides. With a dull herdsman seated on its hump, a camel too becomes dull, lazy and—gluttonous.

The camel is not merely a creature to ride. The nomad [262] makes use of it in many other ways. He cooks its wiry sinews and leathery muscles and eats them, though, even after boiling, the flesh is so tough that one's teeth are either blunted or loosened in the effort to chew it. The Arab drinks the camel's milk, and often in times of stress he will drink the turbid, sour fluid secreted in the [515] creature's stomach. On cold mornings the people warm their hands in the camel's urine and even wash their hair with it. It works deadly destruction on the parasites! The wool of the camel is collected and woven into [237] material for herdsmen's coats and for the garments of the women and children. The poor animals are loaded with incredible burdens; their dung provides fuel for

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fires and their hides[1] are cut up for water-bags, belts, and sandals. 231 [281]

In the grey of one morning I noticed a woman moving amongst the resting animals. Whenever she saw a female camel get up, she would hurry and catch the urine, for which she was waiting, in a bowl she carried for the purpose. The camel's urine smells sweetly of herbs and aromatic plants, it must be remembered. Returning to her tent, one side of which was open, I saw her gather the loose tresses of her little daughter's hair in her hand and dip them into this much-prized hair-wash. She then combed, parted and braided the damp black hair into the usual lovelocks. Again I saw her return to the camels; but suddenly she sat down. A moment later she rose again, threw away her bowl, and hurried back toward her tent, but collapsed before she had gone far. I sprang up and ran to her. 515 ● 302

She said never a word as I tried to help her to her feet; she only withdrew her arms from my hold and cowered on the ground. Then I noticed that she was in labour. As there was no adult within hearing, I called to the woman's little girls to bring bedding and sheepskins. With these I made a couch for her, right among the camels, sent the children back to the tent, and planted myself as a screen before the woman with a sheepskin held over her. Thus she gave birth to her first son. 844

Presently her husband arrived and two slaves of Faris's. The father picked up the newly born babe, and the three men ran to a camel, kicked it in the hip to make it rise, and with their right hands continued to massage the beast's right flank until it let down urine. With this

1 - [Of Camels -- Analyst]

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

In the inner desert

the word *rabî'* does not signify a season of the year; it is therefore impossible to translate it by the word spring, as we may when we are dealing with the settled and cultivated territories. The *fellâḥîn*, inhabitants of the cultivated territories, enjoy the *rabî'* from year to year, and, as it always begins at the same season, the *rabî'* for them signifies the spring. The angel Ǧibrîn, who rules over the rain clouds, likes neither the Rwala territory nor the desert; therefore he spreads his wings over them, so that it rains there only in narrow strips, i. e. where the rain slides off his wings. On the contrary, when he flies over the territory of the *fellâḥîn* he folds his wings as close together as possible, and then the rain falls everywhere. On his journey over the desert Ǧibrîn beats the clouds to make them fly the faster, but over the settled territory he leaves them in peace and it rains abundantly there. The teachers of the Koran in explanation of this conduct of Ǧibrîn say that he is angry with the Bedouins because they disregard the instructions which he imparted to the Prophet (Mohammed).

If the earth is not thoroughly soaked by any of the autumnal rains, then there is no *rabî'*; *al-arẓ alli mâ tinwasem mâ terabbe' muḫṭije*. The abundance, *rabî'*, is also greater and of longer duration if the ground, after its soaking by the autumnal rain, is visited in addition by an abundant *smâk* rain. Then the whole steppe and even the desert are transformed into a delightful meadow. Every valley and piece of low ground or gentle slope, all the plains composed of fine red sand, as well as the rifts and heights are at once covered with an infinite variety of annuals and perennials. The camels nibble at the greatest dainties only and grow so fat that they can hardly move. The milk often flows or drips from the udders of the she-camels, which are full to overflowing; the mares and foals roll about in the thickest grass and the Bedouins, men, women, old people, and children, have more sweet or sour milk and camel's fat than they know what to do with. Moreover, they have the hope of a sure profit in selling the superfluous old or sterile she-camels to the 'Aḳejl buyers, who pay well for fat animals. In a territory where there is a *rabî'* tents can be seen scattered all around. With plenty of good pasture close to their tents the herdsmen do not drive their camels far out. Pure cold rain water can be found in every low-lying place, rock crevice, and hole in the river beds. Every one bathes, the clothes are washed, and parasites of all kinds

2:Musil S-4,5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

destroyed. In the afternoons and evenings the young people hasten to the water holes, *ruḍrâṭ*, in the valley bottoms for their ablutions. They bathe separately, the youths in one place, the girls in another. Their shouts of joy and various songs are heard on all sides. In the tents mushrooms and truffles, young bulbs, and fresh vegetables are cooked and enjoyed.

The local name for the mushrooms is *hawbar*. They grow after warm night rains, *emṭer bel-lejl w-râḥ jaṭaḏamna-l-hawbar*. On the mornings following such nights both men and women go out in search of this dainty, which grows best of all near the channels, while the truffle prefers soil mixed or strewn with sand. When they come to the surface the latter form tiny hat-like lumps, which attract the eye of the picker. The earth or sand covering them is then turned over by the hand or a stick, and the truffle dug out. In cooking they are boiled in salt water and then served with butter or camel's fat. Another method is to bake them in hot ashes after a thorough salting.

Of the truffle, *faḳa'*, there are three kinds: *al-čema*, *az-zbejdi*, and *al-ḥlâṣi*. A Bedouin, having gathered a heap of truffles, sorted them in his tent according to their kinds, saying: "This one is *al-čmajje*, the mother of the little girl will get that; this *az-zbejdi* I will give to the mother of my little son; and the best, *al-ḥlâṣi*, I shall keep myself; *al-čmajje lumm al-bnajje az-zbejdi lumm wlejdi al-ḥlâṣi lardsi*."

All Bedouins greatly enjoy the small bulbs of certain wild plants, especially *aṣ-ṣiṭa*, *rubaḥla*, *hurrâṭ*, etc. Mothers send their boys in search of them with the words: "My little sons, O sonnies! go bring me *aṣ-ṣiṭa*; I will prepare for you *muṭṭiṭa* (a dish of mashed bulbs); *'ejâli ṣâ 'ejâl aṣ-ṣiṭa w-muṭṭiekom muṭṭiṭa*."

In the sun-baked gravel plains (called *ḥamâd*) in a year of abundance the *semḥ* grows with its subvarieties, *ad-da'â'* and *el-ḥawwe*. These plants, when already ripe and still fresh are much sought after by the Bedouins, who place them in pits safe from water or in bags. When dry the plants are beaten with sticks and shaken, and the seed, *ḥe'ber*, which have fallen to the ground, are put into sacks, *'eidl*, and brought to rain-water holes, where they are either left for some time or at least thoroughly soaked until the dry husks crack. Sometimes the large leather water troughs, *ḥowṣ*, are filled with water and the full sheafs are put in; in time they swell and burst.

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

was indemnified, *jeddân 'alejk*. Not long after Sâbel's departure Saṭṭâm led his young warriors on a raid against the Fed'ân. In the depression of Sirḥân he met Sâbel. "Where are thy she-camels?" "I haven't found them." "Why, were they

Fig. 32—Coffeepots (see p. 100).

not branded with the mark of thy kin? What did the chief say to thee?" "I did not go so far. I was caught by the Ṣḥûr pasturing their camels, who bound me in my own plaits, put the Ṣḥûr brand on my right thigh, cut off my plaits and half of my chin beard, and then drove me away with the words: 'Show thy relatives what thou hast got for thy she-camels!'" No sooner did Saṭṭâm see the brand mark of the Ṣḥûr, than he shouted: "Let Allâh judge between them and us! Up and at the Beni Ṣaḫr! *Jeḥûf allâh lena w-lehom 'ala beni ṣaḫr*." Then the Rwala attacked the Beni Ṣaḫr camp, captured more than a hundred men, cut off their beards with sabers and daggers, made the Rwala mark on both cheek and ear of every man, and took all their herds.

Many elderly men have the whole head shaved. Such are called *aṣlc'*. Those naturally bald are nicknamed *qâra'*.

A maiden is very careful of her hair. In the morning she waits for the female riding camel to get to its feet, and, catching its urine in a small dish, she washes her hair with

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date) 1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

it, *tebawwalat*. The camel's urine destroys the lice embryos, refreshes the scalp, prevents itching, and gives the hair a peculiar gloss. Then the girl takes a wooden comb with rough teeth on both sides, combs her hair, *temaššaṭat*, and braids it, *telemm râsah*. The hair above the forehead as a rule she does not plait, but merely trims, so that it hangs down freely, *kuṣṣa*, but she plaits the rest of the hair on the top of the head and above the ears into braids, *ḏwâjeb*, and makes two small pigtails, *'akṣa'*, of the back hair. Each braid ends in a small knot tied with a small ribbon. The braids are neither wound around the head, nor rolled. Long unplaited hair is called *ša'ar*, plaited hair being known as *žeḏâjel* (or *ḳrûn*). Trimmed hair above the forehead is *kuṣṣa*, *nâṣije*, or *ǧabhe*. Tresses: *židle*, *'erf*. or *ḳrûn*. Short hair: *ḥawâf*, *berčem*, *ḳa'-ḳûle*, *râs*, or *šûše*.

Long hair and long tresses are the chief ornament of a woman, and every youth longs to marry a girl or woman thus adorned. The older men do not care for the long hair and advise the youth: "Amuse thyself with a short haired one, if thou canst not get a girl whose tresses are ornamented with coins; *telahha' bumm šûše ilja mâ tǧîk al-manḳûše*."

Nearly all women are tattooed on the lips, cheeks, nose, forehead, breast, around the breasts, and on the belly. This is always done by a gipsy woman, *nûrijje*. First the gipsy pricks certain patterns into the skin, then dips the needle in indigo and transmits this dye into the holes. After this operation she binds the tattoed part of the body, and not until the seventh day is past are the bandages removed, when the spots are washed. The pictures thus produced, *dakk al-wšâm*, generally circles and triangles, are supposed to enhance the maiden's beauty, *min šân zerâfa*.

Both men and women wear on their bare bodies a belt plaited from five thin strips of gazelle leather, the men's being called *ḥaḳw* (or *sebte*), and the women's *barîm* (or *rusejni*). Persons not wearing this belt are named *ma'w* or *aslat*. The Rwala buy the *ḥaḳw* from the Ṣlejb, usually for a quarter of a *meǧidijje* (22½ cents).

MEN'S CLOTHES

The main dress of the men consists of a white shirt (*ṯowb*) reaching to the heels, with broad sleeves ending at the wrist

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411 St. Etienne, cost 20-22 *meǧidijjât* ($18-$19.80); its nickel
713 imitation, manufactured in Egypt and al-Baṣra, sold for 4-15
435 *meǧidijjât* ($3.60-$13.50).

CARE OF THE PERSON

515 To cleanliness the Rwala pay but scant attention. Water must not be wasted, as there is hardly enough for drinking and cooking. In a sand desert they rub their hands and faces with clean dry sand. The clothes are washed and a bath is taken only when they camp near a large rain pond. The youths make their ablutions in the day time, the girls in the evening. [296] The clothes are washed, as a rule, by a negro or a Slejb woman, the mistress of the tent and her daughters looking on disinterestedly, scratching themselves all the while, for it never occurs to them to rid themselves of their lice or to cleanse their dresses thoroughly. Once in a while, perhaps, a wife will delouse her husband, *tefli brâseh*, a sister her brother or sweetheart, a mother her children, and women other women. Soap is kept only by the chiefs for their guests. For themselves they gather *ǒnân*, drying, powdering, and then using it in washing. I brought European soap to some women, but instead of washing themselves with it, they rubbed it dry all over their hands and body for the sake of its pleasant odor.

291 The tribes and even the clans of the Rwala differ not
614 only in their dialect, but also in their dress. All Rwala wear
184 the same dress, but of different colors, cut, and ornament. If a Rwejli sights a troop of riders in the distance, he can tell at once whether they are Rwala and of what clan. He knows this from their saddles and decorations on their saddlebags; the color of their kerchiefs, mantles, boots; the fashion in which they are dressed; their style of sitting in the saddle, etc. He can distinguish from afar a Freǧi from a Kwêčbi, and these from a Mur'ari. Still greater are the dissimilarities between the Rwala and the Sba'a or Sḳûr. A stranger needs months in which to learn the differences in the dress of the various 'Aneze tribes — and years before he is able to distinguish the members of the different clans of the same tribe.